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AUTHOR Novak, Kathy
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ABSTRACT

The goal of Minnesota's early childhood development and care programs is to ensure that families of young children have the opportunity to choose affordable, high quality child care and participate in developmental programs that promote the skills and behaviors necessary for children to succeed in school. This information brief describes and compares the early childhood education and care programs that receive Minnesota state appropriations and are established in state law. Tables delineate the characteristics, eligibility requirements, participation, and funding for each program. (KB)

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Kathy Novak, Legislative Analyst
(651) 296-9253

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Early Childhood Development and Care Programs

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Minnesota's early childhood development and care programs are administered by the Department of Children, Families and Learning. These programs provide education or subsidized care for the state's youngest children. The goal of many of the programs is to ensure that families of young children have the opportunity to choose affordable, quality child care and participate in developmental programs that promote the skills and behaviors necessary for children to succeed in school. Early childhood programs are supported by federal grants, state appropriations, and local funds. This information brief has summary reference tables describing and comparing the early childhood education and care programs that receive state appropriations and are established in state law. The characteristics, eligibility requirements, participation, and funding for each program are shown in the tables.

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Early Childhood Development and Education Programs

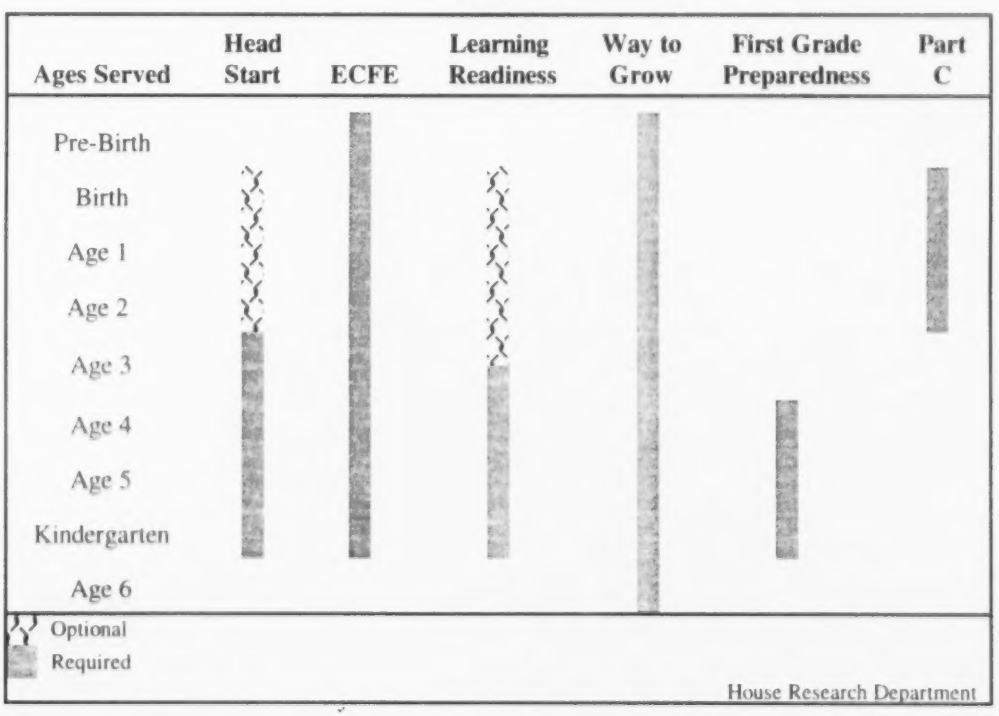
More than 200,000 children participate in early education and development programs that serve children from before they are born until they are enrolled in school.

Administration of early childhood education programs was consolidated in 1995 when legislation established the Department of Children, Families and Learning. Head Start was moved from the Department of Economic Security to the new department effective July 1, 1997. The new department retained several existing early childhood programs administered by the Department of Education, including Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), Way to Grow, Learning Readiness, First Grade Preparedness, and Early Intervention (Part C).

While these programs share certain characteristics, they differ on the specific program purposes, the delivery mechanisms, eligibility factors, including age of children and family income, and the level and type of funding for the program. The chart below compares the ages of children who are eligible for the early childhood development programs. The characteristics of early childhood development programs are described in Table 2. Funding for these programs is described in Table 3.

Table 1

Early Childhood Programs
Ages Served



State and federal funding supports other collaborative early childhood programs.

Early childhood programs excluded from the summary tables do not receive a direct state appropriation or have a direct educational component. Some programs administered by the Department of Children, Families and Learning indirectly receive state funds through collaboration with state-funded programs. Others promote education and development rather than providing direct services. These programs are briefly described below:

Family literacy programs. Designed to improve the educational opportunities of low-income families by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy, and adult basic education. Even Start is a federal literacy program funded through a federal grant. Other family literacy programs use a variety of funds including collaboration with adult basic education, ECFE, and other state-funded programs. Children up to age seven may participate with a parent who is pursuing literacy or basic education.

Title I funded programs. Federal grants for eligible school sites enable schools to provide opportunities for low-income children to acquire knowledge and skills. Title I funding may be used for early childhood education, although most of the funds are used within the K-12 system.

Education of migratory children. A federal allocation to the state is used to help support high-quality comprehensive education programs for migratory children and to help reduce educational disruption for these children. The federal money may be used to help children from ages three to 21.

Early childhood developmental screening. A state requirement designed to assist parents and communities to improve the delivery of educational and health programs to serve all children. Mandatory screening is provided by school districts for all children ages three-and-one-half to four years old. Each child must receive a developmental assessment, hearing and vision screening, immunization review, height and weight measurement, and an assessment of risk factors that could influence learning.

Table 2

Characteristics of Early Childhood Development Programs

	Head Start	Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)	Learning Readiness
Program Description	Program to help low-income families break the cycle of poverty through intense preschool education with health and social services • delivered by federal grantees • typical program is ½ day, 4 days per week. Some full-day programs • all programs require parental involvement • state funding is used to expand services to more eligible children	Program to strengthen families through education and parental support by encouraging the healthy growth and development of children and prevent child abuse and neglect • offered through school districts with community education programs • day-time and evening classes • substantial parental involvement required • optional home-visiting program	Program to enable children to enter school with the skills and behaviors necessary for success • offered by one or more school districts • includes developmental and learning components, health referral services, nutrition, parental involvement, and outreach • services may be site- or home-based • requires coordination with social service providers and other agencies
Eligible Population	Children ages 3 to school enrollment; parents • families at or below the federal poverty guidelines • demonstration projects for children birth to age 2 • 10% of enrollment reserved for children with disabilities • 90% of enrollment must meet income eligibility guidelines • 46% of income eligible were served in 1999	Children from birth to school enrollment; parents and expectant parents • universal access; no income or other eligibility criteria • estimated 42% of eligible population served in FY 97	Voluntary program for children ages 3½ to school enrollment • requires a developmental screening for participation • priority given to children who are developmentally disadvantaged, or with risk factors that could impede their learning • districts may serve children under age 3½ if it is more effective
History	1964 – established by Federal Economic Opportunity Act 1965 – Department of Economic Security administers program 1988 – state funding begins 1997 – transferred to the Department of Children, Families and Learning (DCFL)	1974 – Established by Council on Quality Education with six pilot sites 1984 – permanent state program administered by DCFL	1991 – Program started with 295 participating school districts (69%)
Participation	13,624 Children FY 99 35 Grantees 12,145 Children FY 97 35 Grantees	132,896 Children FY 97 150,663 Parents 349/358 School Districts	46,884 Children FY 97 46,494 Parents 345/353 School Districts

Table 2 (Cont.)

Characteristics of Early Childhood Development Programs

	Way to Grow/ School Readiness Program	First Grade Preparedness Program	Interagency Early Intervention Part C
Program Description	A grant program to promote intellectual, social, emotional and physical development, and school readiness of children • delivered by state grantees • need-based service delivery • requires collaboration with existing services • optional components include home visiting and prenatal outreach	A program to ensure that every child has the opportunity before first grade to develop the skills and abilities necessary to succeed in school • state aid is provided to school districts for qualifying school sites • requires collaboration with other early childhood care and education programs	Comprehensive, coordinated interagency program to provide services to eligible children with disabilities from birth to age 2 • services are provided through individualized family service plan (IFSP) • DCFL, the lead state agency, implements policies with Departments of Health and Human Services
Eligible Population	Children pre-school to age 6 Grantees are local units of government, government entities with joint powers agreements, community action agencies, and nonprofit organizations	All children in the attendance area for eligible school sites • 4-year-olds are eligible for half-day programs • 5-year-olds are eligible for full-day, every day kindergarten School sites are eligible based on a ranking of free and reduced lunch enrollment Participation of school sites is limited by appropriations	Children from birth to age 2 who are developmentally delayed and their families • Minnesota limits eligibility to children who are eligible for special education
History	1989 – established as program administered by the State Planning Agency to fund two metropolitan area projects 1990 – 3 nonmetropolitan projects added 1993 – recoded in Chapter 121 and the administration transferred to the Department of Education; funding limited to existing grantees	1996 – established as a pilot project for fiscal years 1997, 1998, and 1999 1997 and 1998 – expanded to fund more sites June 30, 1999 – statutory expiration of pilot program	1987 – Minnesota's early special education for disabled children preceded enactment of Part H of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) 1991 – beginning of federally funded 5-year Part H phase-in of coordinated, interagency services 1997 – federal reauthorization of IDEA changes Part H to Part C
Participation	4,650 Children FY 99 5 Sites (Minneapolis, St. Paul, Columbia Heights, St. Cloud, Winona)	3,609 5-year-old children 567 4-year-old children (FY 99 estimate) 65 Sites 37 School Districts (includes 5 charter schools)	2,806 Children FY 99 2,620 Children FY 96 94 Local Interagency Committees

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Table 3

Funding of Early Childhood Development Programs

	Head Start		Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)		Learning Readiness	
Funding Description	Federal grant funds are provided directly to grantees State general fund appropriations are allocated: • to federal grantees through a formula • up to 11% reserved for innovative grants • up to 2% reserved for state administration		Funded through state aid, local levy, and user fees ECFE revenue is based on children under age 5 • state aid is the difference between aid and levy • ECFE levy is .653% of tax value (.45% for FY 2000) • an optional home-visiting levy equals $1.60 times the number of children under age 5 User fees may be charged to participants, but must be waived for inability to pay		Funded through state aid and user fees State aid is distributed to participating districts based on the district's proportion of 4-year-olds and proportion of students eligible for free and reduced lunch	
State Appropriations	$19.0 million $10.2 million	FY99 FY97	$14.1 million $13.8 million	FY 99 FY 97	$10.4 million $ 9.5 million	FY 99 FY 97
Local Levy	None		$23.8 million $18.8 million	FY 99 FY 97	None	
Federal Funds	$53.6 million $43.7 million	FY 99 FY 97	None		None	
Other			User fees		User fees	
Citation	42 U.S.C. §§ 9831 - 9855g Minn. Stat. §§ 119A.50 - 119A.54		Minn. Stat. §§ 124D.13; 124D.135; 124D.14		Minn. Stat. §§ 124D.15; 124D.16	

Table 3 (Cont.)

Funding of Early Childhood Development Programs

	Way to Grow/ School Readiness Program	First Grade Preparedness Program	Interagency Early Intervention Part C
Funding Description	A general fund appropriation provides a matching grant to existing grantees Each state dollar must be matched by 50 cents of nonstate money, including in-kind contributions	Eligible school sites in Minneapolis, St. Paul, suburban Twin Cities, and greater Minnesota are selected based on DCFL ranking of the percentage of enrollment eligible for free and reduced meals Eligible sites receive revenue equal to the general education formula allowance times a weighting factor based on half-day or full day attendance. Participating sites remain eligible for the duration of the pilot program	A federal grant is based on the number of live births in Minnesota DCFL is the fiscal agent for federal funds State appropriations may be used if federal funds are insufficient (no state funds have been used) User fees may not be charged for core interventions A sliding fee may be charged for other services A variety of private and public funds pay for services
State Appropriations	$475,000/year FY 94-FY 99	$6.5 million FY 99 $3.5 million FY 97	$400,000 FY 98 (carried over to FY 99) Additional state funding provided through education, health, and human service programs
Local Levy	None	None	A portion of school district levies may be used for early special education
Federal	None	None	$5.3 million FY 99 for Part C
Other	Local match	None	Chapter I funds Medical Assistance Community social services Community health and maternal-child health Private health insurance Parent contributions
Citation	Minn. Stat. § 124D.15	Minn. Stat. § 124D.081	Minn. Stat. § 125A.26 20 U.S.C. §§ 1471 - 1485

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Child Care Programs

Two child care assistance programs subsidize the child care choices for eligible families.

The Department of Children, Families and Learning (DCFL) is the lead agency for receipt of the federal Child Care and Development Fund. Money from the fund subsidizes child care for income-eligible parents participating in authorized activities. Families who are eligible for child care assistance include families who are participating in Minnesota's welfare program (MFIP), families who are leaving welfare, and low-income families who are working or going to school. In addition to federal funds, the state more than doubled general fund appropriations for child care subsidies in this biennium.

DCFL administers two child care assistance programs. The Basic Sliding Fee program provides a child care subsidy to working families who are not getting cash assistance through MFIP. MFIP child care subsidizes the child care costs of MFIP families and provides child care assistance for eligible families for the first 12 months after the family leaves MFIP (known as transition year care). Minnesota counties administer child care assistance programs under the supervision of DCFL. Assistance through the Basic Sliding Fee program is limited by the available funding. Consequently, several counties around the state have waiting lists of families seeking subsidized child care.

School districts may provide unlicensed child care programs for school-age children.

Parents who are eligible for assistance may choose any type of legal child care. Child care facilities and providers are licensed by the Department of Human Services (DHS). Under state law, child care may also be provided by legal, unlicensed care givers. School-age child care programs under the auspices of a local school board are legally unlicensed child care providers. A school district may sponsor a program for the care of children, from kindergarten through age 12, when school is not in session.

A school board with a school-age care program must establish standards for the care. Under state law, neither DHS nor the State Board of Education can license or set standards for these care programs. However, a district that provides care to children younger than kindergarten enrollment, must have a license to operate a child care facility. School-age care is primarily supported by parent fees which may be subsidized by one of the child care assistance programs. State appropriations and an optional local levy pay for the additional costs of providing care for children with disabilities.

Table 4 describes the characteristics of child care programs Funding for these programs is described in Table 5.

Table 4

Characteristics of Child Care Programs

	School Age Child Care/Extended Day	Subsidized Child Care	
		Basic Sliding Fee	MFIP Child Care
Program	School district-sponsored program for before and after school care. Under standards set by local school board, programs must have: • adult supervision • parental involvement in design • partnerships with K-12 and other entities, and • opportunities for secondary student participation	Subsidizes the child care expenses of families based on a sliding fee of family co-payments for authorized employment, education, and job search activities. Families may choose any legal child care provider. Counties administer the assistance program and may make payments to providers or directly to families Provides assistance for up to 120 hours in two weeks for authorized activities	Provides assistance to Minnesota Family Investment Plan (MFIP) participants with an individual plan or according to statutory restrictions
Eligible Population	Children from kindergarten to grade 6 for programs under school board standards A school program must be licensed by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to care for children under age 5	Families with incomes under 75% of state median income and children under the age of 13 (15 for disabled children) • requires a co-payment based on family size and income • requires cooperation with child support enforcement Eligibility determined by available funding and the following priorities: • parents without a high school diploma or GED • families completing the transition year • families subsidized by the portability pool for uninterrupted assistance	Families who participate in the statewide MFIP program, including families who choose to forego the cash portion of the MFIP grant • assistance is fully funded • families leaving MFIP receive 12 months transition year assistance
History	1988 – extended day programs established as an option under the district's community education program 1992 – districts were given levy authority for the added cost of children with disabilities 1993 – added children with temporary problems to children with disabilities for additional revenue. Provided state aid for serving these children	1985 – established in the Department of Jobs and Training to provide child care assistance to AFDC families and families with equivalent income 1985 – transferred to DHS with 52% of appropriations set aside for AFDC families and income eligible post-secondary students 1989 – established as separate programs 1995 – transferred to the DCFL and recoded to chapter 119B	
Participation	115 districts FY 97	16,628 Families FY 99 (est) 10,241 FY 97 8,774 FY 96	19,960 Families FY 99 (est) 7,898 FY 97 8,321 FY 96

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Table 5

Funding of Child Care Programs

	School Age Child Care/Extended Day		Subsidized Child Care			
			Basic Sliding Fee		MFIP Child Care	
Funding Description	Program costs are paid for by a sliding user fee or other public and private sources. School districts may use community education funds or other district funds for the program State aid and levy pay for the added costs of serving disabled children or children experiencing temporary problems		Child care assistance is funded through the federal Child Care and Development Fund, state general fund appropriations, and county contributions. In addition to the federal child care allocation, the state can transfer up to 30% of the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant into the child care fund Child care costs are paid with child care assistance and parental co-payments			
State Appropriations	$304,000 $347,000 $374,000 $381,000	FY 99 FY 98 FY 97 FY 96	$50.8 million $41.8 $24.8 $15.5	FY 99 FY 98 FY 97 FY 96	$64.8 million $34.3 $19.3 $16.0	FY 99 FY 98 FY 97 FY 96
Local	Extended day disabled levy $3.3 million $2.6 $2.3 Other community education and school district funds	FY 99 FY 97 FY 96	County contribution $2.9* million $5.1* $5.4* * voluntary county funding is not included	FY 99 (est) FY 97 FY 96	County contribution $2.0* $2.2* * voluntary county funding is not included	 FY 97 FY 96
Federal Allocation			$16.7 million $13.8 $16.3	FY 99 (est) FY 97 FY 96	$30.6 million $23.4 $17.1	FY 99 (est) FY 97 FY 96
Other	User fees		User fees		User fees	
Citation	Minn. Stat. §§ 124D.19, subd. 11; 124D.22		20 U.S.C. §§ 1471 - 1485 Minn. Stat. § 119B.01 - 119B.16			